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THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN GERMANY¹

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The revolution in Germany strikes the observer as different in essential respects from revolutions which have taken place in other countries. One looks, in such events, for a few short days of blood and battle; for power wrested by force from the grip of those who have held it; for popular turmoil, the citizenry waging conflict behind street barricades against the disciplined but gradually disintegrating and increasingly disaffected troops of the established government—in short, for a *journée* in which the overturn is speedily accomplished and the new régime quickly set up. But the German revolution affords no such spectacle. There has been, to be sure, street-fighting and bloodshed, but they have been incident to the attempt of the extremists to overthrow the revolutionary government or to compel it to undertake a more radical program. The revolution itself was bloodless, and the establishment of the provisional government under Ebert was only the last step in a crumbling process which had been evident during the latter part of the

¹ Previous issues of the REVIEW have contained summaries of the internal political developments in Germany during the war to the abdication of William II, in November, 1918.

administration of Count von Hertling and the whole of that of Prince Max. Not only were a number of radically liberal measures inaugurated during this period, but the ministry of Prince Max included three Socialists, one of them being Philipp Scheidemann, later to become prime minister of the new republic.

Friedrich Ebert's accession to the chancellorship was proclaimed by his predecessor, and the personnel of administration, even in the higher posts, was changed but little. Except for the abdication of the Kaiser and the lesser monarchs, the renunciation of his rights by the crown prince, and the announcement that the government was provisional, pending the convening of a national assembly for the purpose of forming a new constitution for Germany, the events might easily have been brought within the category of orderly legal development. It is true there had been mutinies among the sailors at Kiel and soldiers' and workmen's councils were established in a number of places; but it can scarcely be said that the government was unable to cope with these sporadic disturbances. On the whole the people were quiet and remained so for some time. It was a revolution which was not at all a revolution, and therein lies the key to the events of the succeeding seven months.

In order to understand the complex situation in Germany during this period it is necessary to review briefly the political forces which have been contending among themselves for power. Soon after the revolution all the political parties were reorganized, adopting new names, though they remained essentially unchanged in character and principles. The old Conservative (Junker) party and its minor allies were reconstituted under the name of the German National People's party, with Count Westarp and Baron von Gamp as its leaders. Frankly Pan-Germanists, conservative, militarist and monarchist in principle, this party is awaiting a favorable moment for inaugurating the counter-revolution. As they do not see any immediate prospect for this, they are, on the whole, extremely despondent. They are the "*Swarzseher*" of the present régime. Their political activity is directed toward strengthening the army, toward a strong and ruthless policy of repression against all Bolshevik movements, and es-

pecially do they denounce any suggestion that peace should be made on terms that would deprive Germany of her colonies, or limit her future career as a world power. They have learned nothing and forgotten nothing during the past five eventful years.

Most of the old National Liberal party have joined the German People's party, under the leadership of Dr. Stresemann, whose real program is hidden behind vague promises of peace, freedom, order and bread. They are, in fact, very little changed. While declaring themselves ready to collaborate with the republic they are, in truth, attached to the old times. They understand the futility of a counter-revolution, as the Hohenzollerns have made themselves impossible forever in Germany; but they have no enthusiasm for a republic. Indeed the leader late in April announced adherence to the monarchical principle. Among their election pledges, in certain states, are promises of vigorous support of the interests of German citizens resident in foreign countries. They demand an improved diplomatic and consular service. They seem to prefer Allied occupation to a peace that they would consider ruinous to their interests. Representing the great industrial and commercial elements in the country, their attitude on most political questions differs only from that of the German National People's party in being somewhat less outspoken.

The old Catholic Center has been rechristened the Christian People's party, and acknowledges the leadership of Dr. Spahn and Herr Erzberger. It is making a not very successful effort to attract adherents of other faiths to its banner. It is considerably less intransigent than the other two parties of the Right, has not refused to support the government on occasion, and in the person of its leader Erzberger has indeed shared in governmental councils. It is still, however, the guardian of Church interests and may be expected to approach every political question, even in the momentous circumstances of the present, from this peculiar angle.

These three parties of the Right are capitalistic, though occasionally admitting the principle of socialization in vague terms and with many restrictions. Their hatred of England is still

bitter, and they can scarcely hide their hope of revenge. They maintain that it is the Entente's intention to allow the Bolsheviks to overrun Germany, and they use the Bolshevik menace to private property as a means to secure votes. They have all opposed the measure of the Prussian minister of education for separation of church and state, and the government's order against officers wearing distinctions of rank and swords. They have adopted the motto "March separately, fight together," and while there is no formal alliance, there appears to be sufficient unity of action among them.

On the Left, a new German Democratic party has been formed out of the old Progressive People's party and a part of the National Liberals, under the leadership of a group of very able men, including Herren Fischbeck, Conrad Haussman, Theodor Wolff and Professor Hugo Preuss. This party is out and out republican, in favor of gradual socialization, at least of natural monopolies, with few reservations, but decidedly opposed to spoliatory legislation. They favor free trade, the separation of church and state, and are strongly attached to the principle of the League of Nations. Although predominantly *bourgeois* in character, they are collaborating whole-heartedly with the Majority Socialists and share with that party the control of the government. Among their ranks are a large number of men of high technical training and ability, whose assistance is indispensable at this time. Their leaders are inclined to take a rather sanguine view of the situation. They believe that Germany will develop sufficient strength to check Bolshevism and will recover from the present crisis in a reasonable time.

The Social Democratic party of the early years of the war eventually split on the question of voting war credits. The dissenting minority seceded and formed the Independent Socialist party. The Majority Socialists continued to support the war until the defeats on the western front in the summer and autumn of last year made it clear to the world that the German cause was hopeless. Led by Ebert and Scheidemann, it is this party that has been chiefly in control of the government since events culminated in the abdication of the Kaiser and the resig-

nation of Prince Max in November. Their program included gradual socialization, popular election of judges and officials, a steeply graduated income tax and the separation of church and state. They, of course, are republican and favor a League of Nations. In principles they differ but little from the German Democratic party; their membership is, however, chiefly proletarian, instead of *bourgeois*. *Vorwärts* is their mouthpiece.

The Independent Socialists are led by Herr Haase. They opposed the war during the last two years of its course. They support all proposals of political reform. They stand firmly on the Socialist Erfurt program of 1891; and demand immediate socialization, without restrictions or reservations. They favor the conclusion of immediate peace on the Allied terms. At first inclined to collaborate with the Majority Socialists and to support the government, they have drifted more and more into opposition as the government has tended more and more toward the Right. The Independent Socialists are, in fact, divided into two wings: the Right, which has on the whole supported the government, and may be ultimately absorbed by the Majority Socialists; while the Left, which appears now to be the stronger, approaches the Spartacists, and may eventually be amalgamated with them.

Finally on the extreme Left are the Spartacists, or Communists. In general purpose and principle they are closely affiliated with the Russian Bolsheviks, from whom, moreover, they have received constant and considerable financial support. There has been a well-organized Russian Bolshevik propaganda in Germany, four hundred propagandists who were trained by Schomel, a Bolshevik missionary, at his propagandist school in Moscow, having been sent to Berlin some time before the armistice. Later a similar school was started in Germany. It is said that a daily courier service is maintained through the lines between the Russian agents in Berlin and Moscow. The Spartacists are the German Bolsheviks. They are ultra-internationalists, being avowed enemies of the capitalist and *bourgeois* state. They would deny all share in the government to the capitalist and

bourgeois classes; abolish all public offices in the civil service and the army, as well as taxes and national debts; and substitute a workmen's militia for the army. They are not so numerous as one might think from the noise and confusion they are causing, but they make up in fanaticism. They were opposed to, and did all in their power to prevent, the convening of the constituent national assembly. Direct action, not elections, is the weapon on which they rely. It is this group which is responsible for the almost continuous series of strikes, some of which have assumed the proportions of general strikes, which have so greatly increased the economic distress of the country. It is they also who have opposed the government by force, attempting its overthrow and the establishment of a soviet republic on the Russian model.

Successful for a time in various cities, and notably in Munich, they have eventually in every instance been defeated. They wish to prevent the signing of peace and to force the Entente to undertake the military occupation of Germany, which they believe will result in a world-wide spread of Bolshevism, the overthrow of the capitalist régime and the establishment of international socialism. Drawn for the most part from the industrial proletariat, their membership also includes a considerable number of younger peasants who have returned from the army. Their leaders have been Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg (both killed on January 15 under circumstances not yet fully clear), Ledebour, Levien and Eichhorn.

The provisional government, established under the chancellorship of Friedrich Ebert on November 9, 1918, was composed of three Majority and three Independent Socialists, though most of the high officials of the previous régime were retained in office. It accepted the armistice on November 11 and announced a policy of concluding peace at the earliest possible moment, of immediately inaugurating measures for economic reconstruction, and the convening of a constituent national assembly to be elected on the broadest possible suffrage. In December the date of the election for this body was announced as January 19,

1919. On November 28 the former Kaiser's abdication, in which he renounced for himself for all time his rights to both the imperial and the Prussian thrones, and a similar renunciation by the crown prince were published. On December 28 disagreements between the two sections of the cabinet, growing out of the Spartacist disturbances in Berlin on Christmas Eve, led to the retirement of the Independents, Herren Barth, Haase and Dittman, leaving the Majority Socialists in entire control. With no legal support for the power which they were exercising, and mindful of the fact that, in any case, they represented but one party in the country, they could only pursue a temporizing policy until the meeting of the national assembly. They were bitterly accused of weakness by the parties of the Right for not dealing more rigorously with the Spartacist outbreaks.

Elections for the national assembly were held under the law of November 30, which provided for universal manhood and womanhood suffrage for all citizens over the age of twenty. On the basis of the population before the war this would give an electorate of 39,000,000 (21,000,000 women and 18,000,000 men). However, elections were forbidden in Alsace-Lorraine, and the vote in the Polish provinces was light. Excluding these, a very heavy vote was polled, approximately 90 per cent of the eligible voters participating. A great flood of election pamphlets and posters, and numerous canvassing processions had aroused a tremendous popular interest. Even the sick and crippled were carried to the polls. This heavy vote proves that the Ebert government was able to afford adequate protection to the voters, in the face of determined efforts by the Spartacists to prevent the election of a national assembly. It also proves that women participated quite generally; and that the people understood the importance of the decision which they were called upon to render.

The following table shows the voting strength of the different parties (disregarding the Poles and other sectional groups) as compared with the last previous election of 1912. The Spartacists placed no tickets in the field and either refrained from voting or supported the candidates of the Independent Socialists.

PARTIES	ELECTION 1919		ELECTION 1912	
	No. of votes	Per cent	No. of votes	Per cent
Socialist				
Majority.....	11,130,452	38.7		
Independent.....	2,187,305	7.6		
Total.....	13,317,757	46.3	4,250,400	34.7
Democrats.....	5,261,187	18.3	1,497,000	12.2
Center.....	5,686,104	19.7	1,996,800	16.3
Conservatives.....	2,408,387	8.4	1,493,500	12.2
National Liberals.....	1,473,975	5.1	1,662,700	13.6

Assuming that Alsace-Lorraine would be allowed to vote, the country was divided into thirty-eight electoral districts, each choosing from 6 to 17 members, or 433 in all. With Alsace-Lorraine eliminated, 421 members were actually elected in thirty-seven districts. The method employed in the election was a list system of proportional representation, each party nominating a list of candidates equal to the number of members to which the district was entitled. Every vote cast was counted as a vote for a particular list. The law permits parties to combine their lists, but no such combinations were used in this election. After disregarding the votes of minor parties which cast less than the quotient obtained by dividing the total vote of the district by the number of seats, the votes of the successful parties are divided successively by the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc., and the largest figures up to the number of seats give the number of representatives each party is entitled to. In case a minor party, whose total vote is less than the quotient, should poll more votes than the smallest quotient, it would be assigned the seat instead of the major party, to which had already been assigned one or more representatives.

An example of the results of the election, in the Münster, Minden and Schaumburg-Lippe district, illustrates the system. This district was entitled to elect thirteen members. The total vote and the quotients obtained by the method described above are indicated in the following table. In this particular case the

	CENTER	MAJORITY SOCIALISTS	DEM- OCRATS	CONSERV- ATIVES	NATIONAL LIBERALS
Total vote.....	405,871	290,831	94,186	81,389	62,799
Divided by 2.....	202,935	145,415			
Divided by 3.....	135,290	96,943			
Divided by 4.....	101,468	72,708			
Divided by 5.....	81,174				
Divided by 6.....	67,645				

National Liberals did not poll one-thirteenth of the votes cast but nevertheless obtained one representative.

It will appear from this table that the allocation of seats would give the Center the first, third, fifth, sixth, tenth, and twelfth; the Majority Socialists the second, fourth, seventh and eleventh; the Democrats the eighth; the Conservatives the ninth, and the National Liberals the thirteenth.

The result of the election was as follows: The Majority Socialists secured 165 seats; the Christian People's party (Center), 91; the German Democratic party (Progressives), 75; the German National People's party (Conservatives), 38; the German People's party (National Liberals), 22; the Independent Socialists, 22; and various other sectional and minor parties, 8.

As compared with the composition of the last Reichstag (which it must be remembered had only 397 members) the Majority Socialists have gained greatly, now holding 39 per cent of the seats as against 27.5 per cent held by both branches of the party in the old body. The Conservatives have lost equally heavily, dropping from 17.9 per cent to 9 per cent. The strength of the Center has not been greatly altered, there being a slight loss from 22.2 per cent to 20.7 per cent. The National Liberals have decreased in strength from 11.3 per cent to 5.2 per cent. The Democratic (Progressive) party has gained from 11.6 per cent to 18 per cent.

It will thus be seen that there has been a heavy movement toward the Left. This can largely be accounted for by the fact that the old negative gerrymander resulting from a failure since 1870 to redistrict the country has now been eliminated; and partly by the system of proportional representation now used

for the first time. While there has been some shifting in opinion, it has been less than might have been expected. No party has an absolute majority in the Chamber, and what had been expected now became quite evident, viz., that any ministry which might command the confidence of this body would have to be coalition in character. The election, however, did much to clear the situation and to strengthen the Ebert government. It is of interest to observe that twenty-four women secured seats in the new assembly.

The government announced the convening of the national assembly for February 6, at Weimar, the continual strikes and the constant Spartacist disturbance making Berlin an undesirable place. This decision was, however, bitterly assailed by the Independent Socialists. As the day approached the Spartacists became increasingly turbulent and there was serious doubt whether the assembly would be permitted to meet. The leaders of the soldiers' and workmen's councils called a general congress of these councils in Berlin for the same date, in order to indicate their lack of confidence in the government, and to confuse the situation as much as possible. The government, however, was able to afford ample protection and the assembly convened without incident. The orderliness of the assembly made a good impression. The body displayed a high degree of coherence, and except for the Independent Socialists who had desired to postpone its meeting and now would have, if possible, frustrated its efforts, there was no disturbing element. The opening address by Herr Ebert was largely devoted to a vehement protest against the terms which the Allies had submitted for a renewal of the armistice. He asserted Germany's right to enter the League of Nations on equal terms, and demanded that German Austria be permitted to join the republic. Dr. David David, a Majority Socialist, was chosen president of the assembly, but on his entering the cabinet this post was filled by Herr Fehrenbach, the former Centrist president of the Reichstag. The voting for president and vice-president of the assembly indicated that a working understanding had been reached among the three major parties.

An executive was organized by electing Herr Ebert as President of the republic. He was voted a salary with entertainment expenses of about \$240,000 per annum. He will also occupy the Bellevue Palace in Berlin as his official residence. He announced that as president he would not be a party man but maintain the two principles of his career, viz., pacifism and a stout adherence to the principles of a League of Nations. His first official act was to ask Herr Scheidemann to form a ministry. In this cabinet, consisting of fourteen members, the Majority Socialists had seven seats, the Democrats three and the Center three. Count von Brockdorff-Rantzaу, whose politics are uncertain, held the post of minister of foreign affairs. The new chancellor announced the task of the government in the immediate future to be: (1) The maintenance of the unity of the state by means of a strong central authority; (2) the immediate conclusion of peace; (3) adherence to President Wilson's program; (4) rejection of any peace of violence; (5) restoration of Germany's colonial territories; (6) immediate repatriation of German prisoners; (7) admission of Germany into the League of Nations with equal rights; (8) general and reciprocal disarmament; (9) the constitution of general arbitration courts; (10) the abolition of secret diplomacy.

The national assembly and the new government appear to have started with as large a degree of popular confidence as was possible in the circumstances. By many the assembly was looked upon as a sort of cure-all for the ills from which the state was suffering. The Majority Socialist-Democratic-Centrist *bloc* represented 77 per cent of the assembly, and might expect to command the active support of an equal proportion of the people. It is true that the personalities of Ebert, Scheidemann and Erzberger did not arouse enthusiasm, but this was a democratic régime, and doubtless the change from the aloofness and pomp of royal courts and aristocratic ministers to these simple burgers was a welcome one to many.

It required only a short time, however, to show that neither the assembly nor the executive could command the respect of the nation. The former lost itself in interminable debate. There

is none of the rapid cross-fire of questions and interruptions which give the proceedings of the house of commons a never-failing interest. Rather do long-winded party-hacks indulge in what appear to be copybook speeches. One remembers that it was this same tendency to speech-making that contributed largely to the futility of the Frankfort Parliament in 1848. Furthermore, in spite of the new basis of election, it developed that most of the leaders of the Reichstag were returned to the assembly, and the membership in general was much the same. Where new men of ability were elected they have been regarded as political upstarts and deprived of influence by the traditionalized and hide-bound fogeys who were in control. They have not been appointed to important positions on the committees or given a chance to be heard. Within two months of its convening the assembly was being generally criticized in the press as having completely failed to rise to the occasion, and by June it had almost ceased to attract any attention.

Nor has the experience of the government been much happier. Inclining more and more to the Right in its policy, it aroused increasingly bitter opposition from the Independent Socialists and Spartacists. A considerable number of Majority Socialists, indeed, became disgusted at what appeared to be its lukewarmness in the cause of socialization. The difficulties in the way of economic reconstruction were doubtless insuperable; but the fact remains that it has accomplished nothing, indeed attempted almost nothing, toward the rehabilitation of the country. It is clear to everyone that it is largely controlled by the bureaucracy, which has changed but little. The root of the whole trouble is that the men who are at the helm, whether in governmental or administrative posts, are the same who were responsible for the war. A few of the loftiest personages have been retired, but, on the whole, the old figures and the old methods are in the ascendency. A real revolution would have brought Maximilian Harden to the fore. He has had the courage to denounce the hypocrisy of a republic whose promoters have immediately appointed monarchists to the highest posts; who say that Ger-

many was not defeated and threaten Bolshevism if the peace terms are not to their liking.

On the other hand, the parties of the Right have found ample cause to criticize the government's weakness and condemn its opportunism. It continued to exist merely because there was no one else to take its place. It was generally predicted that it would fall on the question of the peace treaty, whether it decided to accept the treaty or not. One man alone has thus far risen into a commanding prominence which forecasts for him the possibility of a career of more than a few short weeks. That is Herr Noske, minister of national defense. He is described as an imperialist Socialist, who supported the war throughout, expressing at times chauvinistic sentiments which would do credit to Von Tirpitz or Bernhardi. He is a believer in force, and has known how to use the volunteer military units, which were recruited ostensibly for the campaign against the Poles on the Eastern border, effectively against the Spartacists. It is believed that had he a free hand he would give short shrift to the Bolsheviks. There is talk of a dictatorship and Herr Noske is the man usually mentioned in this connection. This is, of course, still mere speculation but history has the habit of repeating itself and another child of the revolution may attempt to emulate the career of Napoleon.

The provisional Ebert government, in preparation for the work of the constituent national assembly, appointed a commission headed by Professor Hugo Preuss, professor of public law in the Berlin Handelshochschule and a former leader of the Progressive party (well-known to students of political science as the historian of municipal government), to frame a draft constitution to be submitted to that body. This was completed toward the end of January, and was accompanied by a remarkable memorandum. This document is essentially an argument for a federation of free states constructed on a new basis, under an elected president with a bicameral parliament.

Preuss says (for it is doubtless his work) that the new constitution must be based on democracy—on the existence of the German people as a political unit and not on the existence of states as such, whether in monarchical or "Free-State" form.

The present states, he asserts, are purely accidental units, arising out of the fluctuations of dynastic policy and achievement. There is no real justification for the existing frontiers. The smallest states are mere appendages of Prussia, and must be grouped into units capable of independent life. This would not be applicable to Hamburg and Bremen, with their Hanseatic tradition. The critical problem is the future of Prussia, complicated as it is by historic memories and sentiments. But it is necessary to recognize that a Prussian republic of 40,000,000 inhabitants is a constitutional, political and economic impossibility inside a German republic of 70,000,000. Furthermore, the disappearance of Prussian hegemony is essential if Germany is to recover her international position. A strong Germany requires a united people; and particularism, which has ever been the bane of German politics, can only be overcome by a complete German unity. Other than territorial differences, such as that between agrarian and industrial interests, can likewise be harmonized only by a strong, centralized national authority. On general grounds it is desirable that Berlin be the capital, but that is impossible if Prussia remains intact. Berlin should be under the central government, not under Prussia.

There should be an end of the right of the member-states to diplomatic representation abroad. The republic should also alone be the unit of defense. The special rights (*Sonderrechte*) of the states should be abolished. An end should be put to the Prussian railway system, and all the railroads of the country centralized under national control. Other forms of communication and transport, including the postal and telegraph system, should be unified. The tremendous financial burdens, under the terrible pressure of which the German Republic begins its existence, make it impossible from the outset to withdraw from the sphere of national finance any appropriate source of revenue. The nation (*Reich*) should have first call in every case, if it is to exist at all. The states and also the cities and towns must adapt their finances and taxation to the framework of national finance, partly by opening up for themselves sources to which the national government lays no claim, and then by being permitted to

add their own taxation to certain national taxes, within the limits determined by the national government. The solution of the problems of socialization, of land policy, of the relations of church and state should be along centralized lines. As regards religion and education there can be great elasticity, but the general principles should be common.

In accordance with these general principles the draft constitution provided for a federal republic consisting of fifteen states, Prussia being divided into seven or eight, and the smaller states combined into units of reasonable size. At the head of the republic there was proposed a president elected by direct vote of the whole people for a ten-year term. He should appoint a responsible parliamentary ministry, whose members, however, need not be members of the legislative body, but who must resign when they lose its confidence. The legislative body should consist of a popular house elected on the broadest suffrage and a states house which would express the federalist principle. The members of the states house would be elected by the unicameral state diets, which in turn would be elected by the same suffrage as the popular chamber of the national legislature. Irreconcilable differences between the two chambers, or between them and the President, would be decided by a referendum.

The writer of this article does not hesitate to say that this draft constitution, and particularly the accompanying memorandum, are the single evidence which the period under discussion has produced that anything like real statesmanship exists in Germany. It is a striking commentary on the unregenerate character of the political forces in control that the judicious advice of Professor Preuss has been entirely disregarded, and the draft constitution apparently never submitted to the assembly. Particularism in Germany has again proven too strong, and instead of this thorough-going reorganization, the old system is merely revamped.

The national assembly speedily adopted unanimously a provisional constitution which had been submitted to it by the government. Under this constitution, except for the important changes that the head of the state is elected by the national

assembly and that the ministry is responsible to the legislative body (which was indeed nominally provided for in the old constitution), there is little change from the old system. No provision for elections is contained in the provisional constitution. The *Bundesrath* is reëstablished in practically unaltered form and powers as the "States Committee;" Prussia remains predominant with nineteen votes in the "States Committee;" the *Sonderrechte* are preserved; and the administration is not centralized. The national assembly has meanwhile undertaken the framing of a definitive constitution but there is little likelihood that it will rise above the particularistic influences that appear to be stronger today than at any time since 1870.

Alongside the regularly constituted, albeit provisional, government, there has existed a second government, or set of governments, which have displayed in many respects more strength, vitality and initiative. This is the system of workmen's and soldiers' councils, or *Asräts* as they have come to be called from the initials (*Arbeiter und Soldaten Rat*). As a phase of the revolution, and coincident with the establishment of the provisional governments for the nation and the several states, self-constituted councils of workmen and soldiers seized control of the government in many of the principal cities, including Berlin. These bodies sprang up like mushrooms and quickly secured an authority which the provisional governments could not gainsay. They appear generally to have permitted the city officials, even the *Bürgermeisters*, to remain in office, confining themselves to a general supervision except for taking over the police function. The Berlin council, pending the establishment of a central executive council representing all the councils of the country, assumed to act as such. Eventually congresses of representatives from the several local councils were held and a central executive council set up. Gradually, too, the basis of their authority has been more clearly defined, though varying in different cities. In Berlin all workers, twenty years of age, whose earnings do not exceed 1000 marks, are eligible to elect, and to be elected, to the workmen's council; while in Hamburg workers are

defined as including "owners, directors, managers," etc. as well as wage earners. Their party composition has also varied a great deal. The Berlin council in the earlier period consisted of seven Majority Socialists, seven Independent Socialists and two Democrats. The tendency has been, however, for them to become predominantly Independent and Spartacist. They are not to be held responsible for the Spartacist uprisings, though these have in many instances had for their purpose the strengthening of the councils. In large part they are of Majority Socialists.

At first there seems to have been a harmonious understanding between these councils and the governments. The central government recognized them as the bearers of the revolutionary will of the people, and as a board of control over the entire administration of their respective areas. Almost from the beginning, however, differences between the councils and the governments began to develop, which at times have issued in open civil war.

Neither the state nor national governments have generally thus far felt sufficiently strong openly to defy the councils or to undertake their suppression. The peculiar situation is indicated by the fact that the councils use the chambers of the diets for their congresses, and the governments cannot say them nay. At the same time that open clashes occur between the troops of the government and those of the councils, negotiations between them continue.

It is evident that the question whether they are to be recognized as a permanent branch of government cannot be much longer delayed. They are demanding with increasing insistence that the economic order shall be transformed into an unbureaucratic community of producers, including masters and men, and of consumers. A complete fusion of capital and labor is their object. As representing this economic order the council system would be developed into a coördinate branch of government. Based upon local district and regional councils, there would be erected a national economic council as a complement to the political legislative body.

The councils have conducted their campaign for complete recognition most cleverly. They have asserted their right to

be considered the true successors of the old executive, have maintained their right to control of the army, have opposed the convening of the national assembly, and called a general congress of councils to meet in Berlin on the day the assembly convened at Weimar. They have utilized general strikes to force compromises from the regular governments. About the middle of March they succeeded in compelling the central government to accord them a certain recognition. Chancellor Scheidemann announced that it was the intention of the government to "anchor" the council plan deep and fast in the constitution, but as yet the exact form which this constitutional recognition will take has not appeared.

How events will shape themselves in the immediate future in Germany no one can tell. The general apathy and despondency of the people, which reveals itself quite as much in the extravagant and wasteful expenditures of the upper classes and in the marked decline in social morality as in the strikes and general disinclination to work on the part of the proletariat; the complete financial bankruptcy of the nation; the inevitable loss of the most important coal-producing areas; the destruction of overseas commerce; and the embittered hatred of all the world are circumstances which would seem to make the problem of political and economic reconstruction insoluble. He would be indeed a bold prophet who would hazard even a guess at the probable outcome.²

² Since writing this article the Scheidemann ministry resigned on June 20, as was anticipated, over the question of signing the treaty of peace. The premier and several other members were so fully committed to rejection that their fall was certain in the face of the national assembly's strong majority for signing. A new ministry has been appointed under the premiership of Herr Bauer, a Majority Socialist, who had been minister of labor in Prince Max's ministry, and had continued under the provisional Ebert government. This cabinet contains seven members of the Scheideman cabinet. It accepted the mandate of the national assembly to sign the treaty, but otherwise cannot be said to represent any new or different principles. Herr Noske remains minister of national defense and continues to be the strong man of the government.